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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USNATO 000319

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TAGS: [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE DISCUSSES DARFUR,
RUSSIA, AFGHANISTAN WITH NATO SECRETARY GENERAL

Classified By: Ambassador Victoria Nuland, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. During a May 16 meeting with NATO Secretary General (SYG) de Hoop Scheffer, Deputy Secretary Negroponte said the U.S. is considering new sanctions to raise pressure on the Sudanese government to accept the AU/UN "hybrid" force for Darfur, and pushing rebel groups to sign the Darfur Peace Agreement. The SYG said he favored expanded NATO relations with the African Union (AU), but "some Allies" were opposed. The SYG and Deputy Secretary discussed the roots of Russia's current behavior, and NATO - Ukraine relations. The Deputy Secretary reported that the new French NSA Levitte had been

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reassuring about France staying in NATO's mission in Afghanistan. End Summary.

Darfur and NATO - AU Relations

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¶2. (C) The Deputy Secretary told the SYG that, during meetings in Paris earlier in the day, Jean-David Levitte had reminded him of incoming French Foreign Minister Kouchner's passion for Africa. The Deputy Secretary said the U.S. would increase bilateral sanctions on Sudan to persuade the Sudanese to accept the AU/UN "hybrid" force for Darfur, while at the same time pressuring rebel groups to sign the Darfur Peace Agreement. The Deputy Secretary said no final decision has been made on where AFRICOM will be located, adding it might, in the end, be dispersed across several locations. The SYG asked about the possibility of a no-fly zone over Darfur, to which the Deputy Secretary noted the distances involved in reaching Darfur make it difficult to conduct such an operation. The SYG noted any such no-fly zone would probably need French support from Chad.

¶3. (C) The SYG gave an overview of NATO's involvement in Darfur and with the AU, noting airlift support for African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and capacity building and training initiatives. He hoped that this "long term investment" would evolve into something more durable, such as NATO support for the African Standby Force or increased training and capacity building. De Hoop Scheffer said he has known AU President John Kufour for a long time, and he was "looking for an excuse" to meet with Kufour to help expand NATO's relationship with the AU. He cautioned, however, that some Allies do not support NATO's engagement in Africa.

¶4. (C) The Deputy Secretary said his Chadian and Mauritanian interlocutors had expressed concern over "Darfur-ization" of the surrounding area. They were also concerned over increased terrorist activity in North Africa and deepening links to Al Qaeda. The SYG agreed, noting that NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue was intended to help build a stronger security relationship with North Africa. He added that if NATO built up its "footprint" too quickly in the Maghreb it might make those governments nervous. De Hoop Scheffer said a long-term approach will be necessary, adding that the December NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting could include a meeting with Mediterranean Dialogue ministers.

Russia and Ukraine
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¶5. (C) The SYG said Kosovo, the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, and the deployment of missile defense systems were currently the most contentious issues between NATO and Russia. He stressed the importance of alliance unity in the face of Russia, adding that the Russians are "masters" at exploiting internal divisions. The Alliance did show unity at the recent Oslo Foreign Ministerial over both missile defense and CFE issues, partly as a reaction to Russian blustering. The Deputy Secretary noted that pre-electoral dynamics and a sense of 1990's aggrievement were affecting Russian psychology, and urged more attention to the likely leadership styles of the two leading Presidential candidates.

¶6. (C) The SYG noted the North Atlantic Council has been invited to visit Ukraine, but expressed doubt about the timing due to upcoming elections. The Deputy Secretary noted the low public support in Ukraine for closer ties with NATO,

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to which the SYG agreed, but said NATO "shouldn't give up." The Deputy Secretary said this relationship is worth keeping alive, adding now is not the time to press too hard, as this might cause a backlash in the Ukraine.

Iraq
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¶7. (C) The Deputy Secretary told the SYG that Iraq will continue as a main focus for the U.S. in the months ahead. Conferences with neighboring countries were useful, and some progress had been made in gaining debt relief and cooperation from the neighboring countries. The SYG said that NATO will continue with its training mission in Iraq, adding that if the U.S. were to leave it would result in "chaos." The Deputy Secretary agreed that any U.S. departure would increase terrorist threats throughout the Middle East.

Afghanistan
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¶8. (C) The Deputy Secretary said that during his May 15 - 16 visit to Paris that new NSA Jean-David Levitte had been reassuring about France's commitment to Afghanistan, noting some less positive campaign statements had been designed to avoid endangering the (now released) French hostage. The SYG said that Chirac was never fully committed to the mission in Afghanistan, and was never "sold" on the concept of Provincial Reconstruction Teams. He expressed hope that the Sarkozy government will give greater support.

¶9. (U) The Deputy Secretary has cleared this cable.
NULAND